

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

response to literature: essay that describes the writer's reactions to and thoughts about a literary work

HERE'S HOW: PREWRITING AND DRAFTING

Step 1: Choose a text. Think of a literary work you have recently read on your own or in class that has meaning for your everyday life. You can choose a short story, play, or poem.

Step 2: Create a reading log. Make a two-column chart. In one column, list words and phrases from the text that catch your attention. In the other column, write your reactions, comments, or questions. When you are finished, circle the responses that are most important to you.

Step 3: Write down your overall response. Use your circled comments and questions to develop a sentence or two that explains how the work makes you feel and why. Your response statement doesn't have to be perfect. You can always change it as you draft and revise your response.

Step 4: Look for more support. Find more words and phrases that affect your response. Examine the text for meaningful metaphors and similes, dialogue, unusual word choices, or phrases that make you smile or think more about the work.

Step 5: Develop an informal outline. Making an outline can help you organize your ideas. You can organize your response from the introduction to the conclusion, or you can organize it from the most important idea to the least important idea.

Step 6: Make a fresh beginning. Draw your reader in by starting your introduction with a surprising or dramatic statement, an interesting or startling fact, a little bit of humor, or a question.

Step 7: Support your key points with details from the text. Don't just write "I liked this" or "I didn't like that." Explain how the details support your key points. Also, don't just quote the text without explaining how and why those selections provoke a reaction.

STUDENT LESSON SUMMARY, CONTINUED

HERE'S HOW: REVISING AND EDITING

Step 8: Provide enough information. Will the reader understand your reaction to the work? Ask a peer reader to underline parts of your response that may be confusing or lack background information. Add details and quotations to explain the work and your reactions.

Step 9: Be precise and use literary terms. Circle literary terms such as *personification*, *simile*, and *metaphor*. If you have few or no circles, revise your response to make it more specific and to include literary terms.

Step 10: Tailor your tone to your audience. Does the tone of your essay match your audience? If not, use formal language that is similar to the language used in the work.

Step 11: Vary sentence beginnings. Draw a box around words you have repeated at the beginnings of sentences. Combine, break up, or rewrite these sentences to change the way they start.

Step 12: Organize your response. Be sure you use transitional words or phrases in your response. Reread your response, and if you do not have enough transitions, add some to make it easier for the reader to follow your thoughts.

Step 13: Make your conclusion stronger. Circle the last paragraph of your essay, and make sure you have summarized the key points and meaning of the work.